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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/ZIMBABWE: DUTCH PM, FM CALLS TO MBEKI,  
TSVANGIRAI; MFA SOLICITS US VIEWS ON NEXT STEPS

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons 1.5(b,d)

11. (C) Summary: On June 26, Dutch MFA Zimbabwe desk officer Melle Leemstra gave poloff a summary of June 25 calls between FM Verhagen and Mr. Tsvangirai, and between PM Balkenende and President Thabo Mbeki. Tsvangirai wants greater AU engagement in resolving the situation and proposes a ceremonial role without executive power for Mugabe. Mbeki sees himself as a "neutral" mediator who will not force a solution. A senior MFA official contacted the Embassy on June 27 seeking U.S. views on what to do next. End Summary.

12. (C) Verhagen-Tsvangirai call: FM Verhagen spoke with Tsvangirai just before the latter's June 25 press conference in Harare. Tsvangirai urged broader AU involvement, possibly through a "super troika" that would include former Mozambique president Chissano. Tsvangirai proposed a two-year transition government to lay the groundwork for free and fair elections. Mugabe would remain in a ceremonial position, with no executive powers. Tsvangirai would have executive powers to reform the security sector. FM Verhagen emphasized to Tsvangirai that he was welcome to stay in the Dutch embassy. Verhagen agreed that the elections in Zimbabwe should be canceled, and that the AU should play a role in resolving the crisis. Verhagen added that the outcome of the parliamentary elections should provide the basis for any transition government.

13. (C) Balkenende-Mbeki call: The Dutch PM gave Mbeki a read-out of the Verhagen-Tsvangirai call. He emphasized that the international community could not support reconstruction funding for Zimbabwe if Mugabe retained executive powers. He urged South Africa and the South African Development Community (SADC) to declare the elections null and void. Mbeki thanked Balkenende for hosting Tsvangirai. He noted that he could not force an agreement and that he sees himself as a neutral mediator. Mbeki said that he had the impression calling off the election would be impossible.

14. (C) Dutch assessment: Leemstra noted Mbeki's statement -- that canceling the election was impossible -- was "not in line with the messages we've received from elsewhere." Tsvangirai will be "comfortable and safe" in the Dutch embassy "for the foreseeable future." FM Verhagen is not taking a position on different possible outcomes to resolve the crisis, but would facilitate a solution. The Dutch have urged the EU presidency to issue a statement on Zimbabwe, but there has been some delay as the presidency "is on its last legs." The AU summit next week is also a forum for next steps. The MFA said operational contact between the U.S. and Dutch embassies in Harare was good.

15. (C) Next Steps: MFA Director General for Political

Affairs Peter de Gooijer called the A/DCM June 27, prior to the weekly Cabinet meeting, soliciting U.S. views on the situation and next steps. The A/DCM re-iterated current U.S. guidance and said we would check with Washington. After e-mail exchanges with Washington and checking with Embassy Harare, the Charge later spoke with de Gooijer and stressed the close cooperation between our embassies in Harare. He promised to keep de Gooijer informed of developments.  
Gallagher